3:Stone E-5 (1945) 1949
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Boruca

SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

423 Land Tenure. The *Boruca* consider the
648 territory in which they live as the property of the tribe at large. Legally, the Costa Rican Government has not yet made a reservation of this section. This is due, perhaps, to the relative remoteness of the area from the towns of the central plateau, and to the very broken nature of the terrain. It may also be
[609] partly the result of the hostile attitude of the *Boruca* to any stranger desiring to settle amongst them. No non-Indian has property in this region.

423 Each family has from three to five *manzanas*
311 for their own use, often as far as a league (3 miles) from the village. This is their "farm," and is worked continuously until the soil runs out, then a new spot is selected, and the forest
423 cleared to start again. The village, as a whole,
794 has a *manzana* for cultivation for the church. Each individual is required to do his share of
[476] work on this land. The Indians go in groups to clear the field and to plant it with corn, rice, beans, and sugar cane. Formerly the church had cattle, but this situation no longer exists in Boruca. When the crops are gathered, they are stored in a special room in the parish house to be kept for the use of the priest on
[735] his bi-yearly visits, or for the poor when the farming year is bad. Unfortunately, nowadays, this custom is slowly disappearing.

423 It is said that up to only a few years ago, the town also had its field, and that there were no individual small farms as there are today. The great number of barren hills which
311 are commonly called "savannas," and which clearly retain the vestiges of former tilled rows (see fig. 10, *e*), serve as silent proof of the authenticity of this tradition, as well as to the Spanish reports of the great number of Indians who inhabited this region at the time of the Conquest. The savannas today are of particular importance to the *Boruca*. Economically, these savannas furnish the roof of the house (see p. 12), and the food for the few animals which these Indians possess. Besides this, they yield a grass that is considered necessary to use in the bath of the new-born child (see p. 20), and a grass which is often used to make *maracas* (see p. 29). Consequently, no one is allowed to fence off the

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savannas, and the Indians complain bitterly because many of these fields are being lost to nature, who is reclaiming her own. 311

Property and Inheritance. The oldest male member of the family distributes the property at the death of an individual. If the male members are too young, then the oldest female member does the dividing. Concerning the property, we may judge the economy of the tribe as a whole, more or less clearly from the situation in Boruca, the largest single community of these people. 428

Cattle is a rich man's privilege in Boruca. Amongst the three hundred and twenty-four inhabitants, there are only one hundred cows. These are owned by sixteen individuals, no man having more than six. There are forty-seven houses in the town, however, and there is an ox for the majority of the households, at least one or more pigs, and numerous chickens. In addition to this, there are four bulls, each one with a separate owner, and twenty horses divided amongst six people. The pigs are raised to sell to the *ladinos* and to eat. The cows are seldom killed, but are used as a medium of wealth, to sell, or to pass on as an inheritance. The cows are seldom milked. 231 [556] [439] [556] 234

Social Organization. A few vestiges of an older communal relationship are seen in the former lack of individual farms, and today, in the *juntas* or "get-togethers" of the Indians. When a new house is to be built, the man who wants to erect it calls upon his friends for help, after he has collected the necessary material. They all join together, and the construction is ready in a short space of time, the owner giving chicha, and often food to the helpers. It is interesting to note also that on one day a year, designated now by the police chief, but formerly by the council, the men gather to cut the grass and to "clean" the village of Boruca. They go systematically from house to house, and cut all the weeds in sight. This helps to maintain Boruca as a cleared, sanitary spot. 476 [342] [364]

Political Organization. Most traces of political organization have disappeared. The outstanding authority is the police agent, who is an Indian, but is appointed by the Government of Costa Rica. He is, however, de- 625 625 623

302 (painted) below the eyes and on the cheeks. . . ." [84] In the 20th century, there is no trace [178] of paint in the Caribbean region. On the [177] Pacific side, a few women copy non-Indians by putting *achiote* on their cheeks in place of rouge and using lipstick which they buy. [751] Cocoa butter is applied occasionally as a protection against the sun.

292 In upper Talamanca and upper Chirripó on festive occasions, during short periods of group [479] work in building a house, clearing forests, hauling logs for a clan grave, etc., men still wear [231] headdresses made of white feathers and of macaw and eagle feathers (*see* Reunions).

301 Formerly the *usegLa* (*see* Social Organization) wore necklaces of jaguar teeth. Today, [825] boys use these necklaces "to get them used to hunting and take away fear of the jaguar." Beads made from sea shells are mixed with these teeth (fig. 12, *c*). The long all-shell [178] strings, called *chaquira* and mentioned in Spanish reports,[85] are not known now. Chil- [777] dren have a "good luck" necklace called *sewivu* in Cabécar. This is made from the bark [824] of a tree called *kuri* which is claimed to be immune to disease and to propagate of its own [237] accord. Sea shells, seeds (occasionally carved), bones, and jaguar, monkey, or alligator teeth are strung on it (*see* Manufacture). When financially possible, women wear strands of [439] red beads which are bought in trading posts or commissaries. There are no earrings in the remote sections.

301 On the Pacific side, the "good luck" neck- 184 laces of children have fewer or no teeth and [777] often a Roman Catholic charm or cross is worn. Here women wear earrings and single [439] strands of glass beads bought from traveling merchants.

TRANSPORTATION

481 roots. They are also adept at crossing swift boulder-filled rivers on foot. Their only aid when traveling is a long staff which they cut for this purpose before undertaking a journey.

[84] Fernández, 1883, vol. III, ftn. 10, p. 338.
[85] Fernández, 1882, vol. II, p. 152.

warns when it is going to rain by howling in the morning and in the afternoon.

(17) Why the Cuyeo[202] Has a Tightly Closed Beak[203]

(*Bribri*)

Once *sibu* became ill and he sent the *cuyeo* to find out if he would get well. The bird took it upon himself to consult no one but to tell *sibu* that the answer was he would die. As a punishment for this, he, *sibu*, pressed the cuyeo's beak tightly shut.

RECREATION

of food and drink will be offered them. Conversation, in this case, is confined almost entirely to the men or if there are women with the travelers, they speak separately with the women of the household.

Hunting and fishing may in a sense be classed as recreation for the men as well as part of their livelihood. Here again, except in the rare instances of community use of fish poisons, it is a family matter.

Women and young girls of the same family, particularly among the Bribri, are fond of gathering at the side of a stream to wash clothes and grind foodstuffs. They swim and sing, praising in their songs the virtues of their respective swains (*see* Songs). This is the closest these people come to what might be termed a normal visit.

Cursing is not usual. The worst phrase a Bribri can use against another is:

bé	*ɾɔr*	*wɛ̀bLa*	*suLue*	*es*	*bɛ́ɾɔa*	*bɔmitsɛn.*
you	are	man	bad	like	devil	take (carry off).

The really unpleasant word here is *suLue* which means bad or ugly and is applied as a curse. A milder term is *bikési* which means useless, lazy, or coward. In Cabécar, however, the equivalent of this is *səkəɲ́ɛ́* which is a very strong term.

Reunions. Reunions, although pre-Columbian

[202] *See* Linguistic Texts: *Iipə* (coyeo).

[P.69(A)] SA19 Talamanca SA19 Bribri Cabecar

476 574 273 [571] [535] [533] [184] [534] traditions, are known by the Spanish term *juntas* or *bLo-ʒé* (chicha-to drink) in Bribri, or in Cabécar *dí*[204]-ʒɔ (chicha-to drink). They are held when there is need of group labor such as building a house, clearing a field, making a bridge, etc. It is the only time except at death or bone burial that groups of people meet. The person giving the *junta* must supply liberal quantities of chicha and at least sufficient food. Dancing with singing, particularly on the Caribbean side, forms part of the entertainment. On the Pacific, singing is not as

[Text continues top of P.69(B)--analysis]

THE ARTS

534 [172] [824] [237] [381] [824] [766] [184] [237] **Musical Instruments.** Upright drums are the preferred instruments of Talamanca. In pre-Columbian graves they are found fashioned of clay and occur from miniature sizes to three feet in height. Today they are made of palm or cedar with one end covered with iguana skin and the other end open. The skin is fastened to the wood with a glue made from the red fruit of the *butsí* tree and is then tied with *pita*. Their size varies from two and a half to three feet and they are played by hand. Formerly a small all-wooden drum with a U-shaped slit[205] was used at the burial of chiefs. These were played with a bone or a stick. The people on the Pacific side do not have the upright drum but use the Chiricano *caja* or round drum of palm wood covered at both ends with wild boar skin and played with two sticks.

534 237 [202] In Talamanca, and as a rule in all *jawá* houses, armadillo shells are rubbed with a stick while those of land turtles are used in a similar manner or as clappers. The conch shell is made into a horn to relay messages but not for a musical instrument. Rattles of gourds filled with seeds or pebbles and with fowl bone or wooden handles are also seen.

533 [184] **Tempo.** There are varied beats for the upright drum: 4 short and 1 long; 3 short and 1 long; 2 short and 1 long. As many as twenty drums were played at one time in Talamanca when the Singer functioned. On the Pacific side, the old pieces are seldom heard. The

[Text continues middle of P.69(B)--analysis]

[192] [204] *dí* is also the word for water and is often used for river.

476 common and the accordions, guitars, and the
574 round drum or *caja* take the place of the
273 aboriginal upright drum (*see* The Dance). The
[184] guests, who wear their best clothing (*see*
[534] Adornment), repay their host by giving their labor free until the project is completed. These affairs are noted for the excessive drinking.
[578] Few if any fights occur, however, and the over-intoxicated as a rule simply fall asleep guarded by his female companions or vice-versa, and the joint work of the men begins as usual the following day lasting until noon.

THE ARTS

The
533 majority of the dances and music consist of
535 the Chiricano *son*, *punta*, and the waltz. The
[534] accompaniment is formed by an accordion, guitar, or violin and the round drum.

535 **Dances.** There are many different dances, both in connection with ceremonies and for sheer pleasure. The Bribri in particular have the greatest number of secular dances which
[476] are performed at gatherings called *juntas* usually held to build a house, fell a clearing, or some such joint labor where friends come in to help. Many of the songs that accompany
[198] the dances are in a language not understandable to the singers. Some are sung in Térraba. There are two traditional dance methods: in a line or in a circle. The circle type is called *buLik-Lak*. If drums accompany the performers, they remain outside of the ring. Arms are raised horizontally and interlocked. The first movement consists of one step to the right side and a short one to the left with the body inclined slightly forward. The second movement starts in a similar fashion but the beat changes and the two steps are more marked, the second ending in a small jump or hop. Suddenly, the dancers go in the opposite direction and continue with the second movement only. The sideward hop necessarily makes the circle go forward and backward. In the *surbon*, a circle dance, the ring is formed first by men and then women put their heads between the arms of the men and all participate.

There are a number of line dances, for

*** Gabb, 1875, p. 517.